

What is claimed is:

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- 1 1. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
3 determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and
4 outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription price
5 stored for the periodical.
 - 1 2. The method of claim 1 in which the step of receiving an identifier comprises:
2 optically scanning a bar code that indicates the periodical.
 - 1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of an issue of the periodical
3 and the subscription.
 - 1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
2 receiving subscription information;
3 ✓ transmitting the subscription information to a fulfillment house for fulfilling the
4 subscription.
 - 1 5. The method of claim 3 in which the step of receiving subscription information comprises:
2 ✓ receiving subscription information from the customer.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 adding the subscription price to a purchase price.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 determining subscription information that corresponds to the customer identifier.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining whether the customer has previously been offered a subscription to the
3 periodical.

1 10. The method of claim 9 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if the
2 customer has not previously been offered a subscription to the periodical.

1 11. The method of claim 9 in which the step of determining whether the customer has
2 previously been offered a subscription to the periodical comprises:
3 determining whether the customer has previously purchased the periodical.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining whether the customer already has a subscription to the periodical.

1 13. The method of claim 12 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if the
2 customer does not already have a subscription to the periodical.

1 14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining a number of times that the customer has purchased an issue of the periodical.

1 15. The method of claim 14 in which the step of outputting an offer is performed only if
2 number of times that the customer has purchased an issue of the periodical exceeds a
3 predetermined threshold.

1 16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 storing an indication that the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

35% off
low price
3 months
x free issue

1 17. The method of claim 16 in which the indication that the customer is entitled to a free
2 issue of the periodical indicates the periodical and a number of free issues of the periodical.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving a cancel signal; and
3 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1 19. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 initiating a subscription to the periodical.

1 20. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
3 determining an issue price of the periodical;
4 determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;
5 outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to the
6 periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;
7 receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and the
8 subscription; and
9 adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the
10 subscription.

1 21. The method of claim 20 in which the step of determining if the POS terminal can initiate
2 a subscription for the periodical comprises:
3 determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical.

1 22. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
3 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
4 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical; and
5 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free
6 issue of the periodical.

1 23. The method of claim 22, further comprising:

2 receiving a response to an offer for a subscription to the periodical, the response
3 indicating the subscription.

1 24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:
2 storing an indication that the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical if the
3 response to the offer indicates the subscription.

1 25. The method of claim 22 in which the step of receiving an identifier that indicates a
2 periodical comprises:
3 optically scanning a bar code that indicates the periodical.

1 26. The method of claim 22, further comprising:
2 storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge.

1 27. The method of claim 22, further comprising:
2 transmitting an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge.

1 28. The method of claim 27, further comprising:
2 transmitting the indication to a fulfillment house.

1 29. The method of claim 22 in which the step of determining whether the customer is entitled
2 to a free issue of the periodical comprises:
3 determining whether there is a free issue entry associated with the customer.

1 30. The method of claim 29 in which the free issue entry indicates the periodical and a
2 number of free issues of the periodical.

1 31. The method of claim 30, further comprising:
2 decreasing the number of free issues of the periodical if the issue of the periodical was
3 provided without charge.

1 32. The method of claim 22, further comprising:
2 receiving a cancel signal; and
3 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1 33. The method of claim 32 in which the step of storing an indication that the customer is not
2 entitled to a free issue of the periodical comprises:
3 canceling a free issue entry associated with the customer and the periodical.

1 34. The method of claim 32 in which the cancel signal indicates a periodical and a customer.

1 35. The method of claim 22 in which the step of providing an issue is performed once during
2 a predetermined time period.

1 36. The method of claim 22, further comprising:
2 storing an indication of the date on which the issue was provided.

1 37. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
3 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
4 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;
5 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free
6 issue of the periodical;
7 storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;
8 receiving a cancel signal; and
9 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1 38. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
3 determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;
4 determining an amount of points of a customer; and
5 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points exceeds
6 amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1 39. The method of claim 38, further comprising:
2 outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if the amount of points exceeds
3 amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1 40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:
2 receiving a response to the offer.

- 1 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 receiving subscription information if the response indicates acceptance of the offer.
- 1 42. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 decreasing the amount of points if the response indicates acceptance of the offer.
- 1 43. The method of claim 38, further comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier that identifies the customer.
- 1 44. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription to a
3 periodical;
4 receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to
5 the customer; and
6 adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the number of issues
7 of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.
- 1 45. The method of claim 44, further comprising:
2 transmitting a cancel signal, the cancel signal indicating a customer and a periodical.
- 1 46. The method of claim 45 in which the cancel signal indicates when an issue of a
2 subscription to a periodical is mailed.

1 47. The method of claim 45 in which the cancel signal further indicates a time after which the
2 customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

Sub B3 1 48. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:

4 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
5 determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and
6 outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription price
7 stored for the periodical.

1 49. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
3 means for determining if there is a subscription price stored for the periodical; and
4 means for outputting an offer for a subscription to the periodical if there is a subscription
5 price stored for the periodical.

1 50. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:

4 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
5 determining an issue price of the periodical;
6 determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;

7 outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to the
8 periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;
9 receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and the
10 subscription; and
11 adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the
12 subscription.

1 51. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 means for optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
3 means for determining an issue price of the periodical;
4 means for determining if the POS terminal can initiate a subscription for the periodical;
5 means for outputting an offer for one of an issue of the periodical and a subscription to
6 the periodical, the offer including the issue price and the subscription price;
7 means for receiving a response to the offer, the response indicating one of the issue and
8 the subscription; and
9 means for adding the subscription price to a purchase price if the response indicates the
10 subscription.

1 52. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:
4 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
5 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;

6 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical; and
7 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free
8 issue of the periodical.

1 53. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 means for receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
3 means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
4 means for determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;
5 and
6 means for providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled
7 to a free issue of the periodical.

1 54. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:
4 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
5 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
6 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;
7 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free
8 issue of the periodical;
9 storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;
10 receiving a cancel signal; and
11 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1 55. A method for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer;
3 optically scanning a bar code that indicates a periodical;
4 determining whether the customer is entitled to a free issue of the periodical;
5 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the customer is entitled to a free
6 issue of the periodical;
7 storing an indication that the issue of the periodical was provided without charge;
8 receiving a cancel signal; and
9 storing an indication that the customer is not entitled to a free issue of the periodical.

1 56. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:
4 receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
5 determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;
6 determining an amount of points of a customer; and
7 providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points exceeds
8 amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1 57. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:
2 means for receiving an identifier that indicates a periodical;
3 means for determining an amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical;
4 means for determining an amount of points of a customer; and

5 means for providing an issue of the periodical without charge if the amount of points
6 exceeds amount of points necessary to purchase the periodical.

1 58. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a
2 method performed by a computer for establishing a subscription to a periodical, the method
3 comprising:

4 receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription to a
5 periodical;

6 receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to
7 the customer; and

8 adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the number of issues
9 of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.

1 59. An apparatus for establishing a subscription to a periodical, comprising:

2 means for receiving a customer identifier that identifies a customer having a subscription
3 to a periodical;

4 means for receiving an indication of a number of issues of the periodical provided
5 without charge to the customer; and

6 means for adjusting a number of issues remaining in the subscription based on the
7 number of issues of the periodical provided without charge to the customer.